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E.O. 12958: DECL: AFTER KOREAN REUNIFICATION  
TAGS: PREL ENRG KS  
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT ROH VISITS AFRICA TO FURTHER ECONOMIC  
AND DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

REF: A. SEOUL 969

¶B. SEOUL 453

Classified By: A/DCM JOSEPH Y. YUN. REASONS 1.4 (B, D).

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) MOFAT officials told poloff that President Roh Moo-Hyun's March 6-13 visit to Egypt, Nigeria and Algeria as well as his meeting with the Secretary General of the League of Arab States on March 8, focused on improving economic cooperation and bilateral relations. Roh and Egyptian President Mubarak discussed bilateral trade and energy, agricultural, petrochemical, and IT cooperation. Mubarak also agreed to consider purchasing ROK-produced ammunition. Roh and Nigerian President Obasanjo discussed energy cooperation and infrastructure investment in Nigeria. They also signed a Product Sharing Agreement worth \$486 million dollars, which called for joint exploration of two oil fields in Nigeria. Roh and Algerian President Bouteflika signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement, which called for increased energy cooperation, and agreed to promote joint development in oil storage, IT, and construction. During his African visit, Roh requested support for Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon's UNSYG candidacy and announced that Seoul would triple its Overseas Development Assistance for Africa to \$100 million by 2008. We understand that Ban's candidacy was favorably received in all the stops (ref a). END SUMMARY.

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EGYPT VISIT MARCH 6-9

¶2. (C) On March 22, poloff met with Deputy Director Choi Sung-soo of the Middle East Division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT) for a readout of President Roh's trip to Egypt. Roh met with President Hosni Mubarak and attended a state dinner in his honor, met with Koreans living in Egypt, the Egyptian Businessmen's Association, and League of Arab States Secretary General Amre Moussa. Roh also took a sightseeing tour to the Great Pyramid and Sphinx.

¶3. (C) Roh told Mubarak that Seoul and Cairo should

strengthen relations, particularly in trade and investment. He proposed to send a delegation to focus on increasing imports from Egypt and welcomed a reciprocal visit to South Korea by year's end. Roh said the two countries should increase cooperation in the areas of electronics, automotive, petrochemical, investment, and agriculture. Roh offered assistance to help make Egypt the IT hub of Africa. The then-Minister of Information and Communication Chin Dae-je offered to host an IT forum for Egypt to introduce South Korean IT products and services. Seoul was seeking to introduce Wide-Area Broadband and Digital Multimedia Broadcasting and assist Cairo to develop those products. Separately, Seoul requested Egyptian support for the selection of Pyeongchang in Kangwon Province, South Korea, as the site of the 2014 winter Olympics.

¶4. (C) Mubarak welcomed Roh's comments but stressed that South Korean exports to Egypt greatly exceed imports from Egypt. Mubarak therefore welcomed more South Korean investment and proposed building an industrial complex for South Korean companies in Egypt. Deputy Director Choi claimed that Mubarak expressed his support for ROK Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon's candidacy for UN Secretary General. Mubarak also offered his assistance for dialogue with North Korea. However, Mubarak said he had only met with the previous North Korean leader Kim Il-Sung and did not know how North Korea would respond to Egyptian approaches.

¶5. (C) The two leaders agreed to expand cooperation in the defense industry. Egypt said it would have its Defense Minister study the possibility of purchasing ammunition from South Korea. Deputy Director Choi did not comment on the type and quantity of ammunition being discussed, adding only that it was being negotiated by the South Korean Ministry of Defense.

¶6. (C) While in Cairo, Roh also met with League of Arab States Secretary-General Amre Moussa in Cairo. The two discussed the state of affairs and current issues in their respective regions. Roh and Moussa also discussed ways to further relations between South Korea and Arab countries and the need to expand economic cooperation.

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NIGERIA AND ALGERIA VISITS MARCH 9-13

¶7. (C) On March 17, Assistant Director Chang Su-ik of the Northwest Africa Division, MOFAT, provided polooff with a summary of President Roh's visit to Nigeria and Algeria. Roh arrived in Nigeria on March 9 and held a meeting and state dinner with President Olusegun Obasanjo. The summit focused on bilateral energy cooperation, with Obasanjo emphasizing the need to increase economic ties between the two countries in the area of energy production and exploration. Roh proposed to increase the number of South Korean companies involved in Nigeria's infrastructure and manufacturing sectors. At the conclusion of the summit, Roh and Obasanjo signed a Provisional Sharing Agreement to begin joint exploration of two oil possible sites, oil blocks OPL 323 and OPL 321. The deal was reported to be worth a combined \$486 million. The two sides also signed two MOU's concerning bilateral cooperation on energy and transportation.

¶8. (C) On March 11, Roh arrived in Algeria and held a summit with President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. Roh also attended a luncheon and paid a call on Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia. Roh later met with representatives from the National People's Assembly and National Council. Roh and Bouteflika agreed to expand South Korean participation in Algeria's oil and gas production industries by signing a Strategic Partnership Agreement. They also agreed to the signing of five MOU's on bilateral cooperation in natural gas, solar-power, oil storage, domestic construction and urban developments. Bouteflika noted that Algeria would spend up to \$100 billion to upgrade its housing, infrastructure, and social welfare facilities. Roh expressed his hope that Algeria would allow South Korean companies to be a part of Algerian development

goals.

BAN KI-MOON'S UNSYG CANDIDACY

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¶9. (C) Roh requested support from all three countries for Ban Ki-moon's candidacy to become the next United Nations Secretary General. Our MOFAT interlocutors claimed that

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Mubarak expressed support for Ban's candidacy, but that Nigeria and Algeria failed to express support for Ban publicly. (NOTE: Per ref a, Ban on March 24 told the Ambassador that Egypt expressed its support for his candidacy and that the Nigerian and Algerian leaders were encouraging and enthusiastic. END NOTE.)

SOUTH KOREAN AID TO AFRICA

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¶10. (C) While in Nigeria, on March 9, Roh publicly announced that South Korea would increase its Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) to Africa from \$31 million currently, to \$100 million by 2008. For 2006, South Korea planned to increase its ODA to Africa by \$50 million, bringing the total to \$80 million. Roh also announced that South Korea would invite one thousand students, government workers, and technical experts from Africa to South Korea in order to receive training and education.

COMMENT

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¶11. (C) Roh's energy-related efforts are consistent with Korea's broad strategy (described in ref b) of diversifying its sources of energy, as currently 78 percent of its oil supply comes from the Middle East. Korean companies have recently become very active in cooperative oil exploration

ventures of the types agreed to in Nigeria.

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